

Gertrude Mihsfeldt, interviewee  
Evelyn Watters, interviewer

January 13, 1984

# TAPE INDEX

- 0 Gertrude's parents lived in Elbing, Prussia from 1864 - 1903. Two older brothers and father owned a pharmacy.
- 1:00 Customer asks for bear-fat - no such thing - He substitutes lard. Humorous story
- 2:00 Decision to go to America in 1904. Relatives there.
- 2:30 Another humorous event. Gertrude sees first black face in New York restaurant - she reaches to feel his skin.
- 2:45 Her father opens a drug store in Courtland, Nebraska. Her first and only pet, a chicken carried on her shoulder.
- 3:00 Gertrude's grandfather dies in Germany and leaves a legacy. They return to Germany to Zuppot, a resort town by the sea. Father experiences some financial losses through investments. A brother returns to America.
- 4:00 Gertrude in school - gymnasium. Father becomes ill. Mother trains to become a nurse. Gertrude goes to live with an aunt in Bartenstein at age eleven. Family goes in different directions.
- 5:00 War changes things. Father dies in one year.
- 6:00 She, a good student - does a little sketching.
- 7:00 War is over - depression coming. Mother is in Danzig working as a nurse. More family changes.
- 8:00 The brother persuades them to come back to America.
- 9:00 Aunt Nellie and Uncle befriend them in Salt Lake City year of 1920.
- 10:00 They live in an apartment. She and brother see white bread again - eat the whole loaf. Humorous
- 11:00
- 15:00 What to do in America? Aunt helps them look for work  
Story of woman who had white shirts to starch and iron for three sons and husband. Gertrude not used to electric irons.  
  
Aunt asks, "Would you like to go to college?"  
Encourages her. "You can do it!"
- 17:00 Gertrude and her brother enroll in University of Utah

## Gertrude Mihsfeldt

20:00 Gertrude audits at first, then enters classes as Home Economics student. Everyone so kind. She becomes publicity chairperson. She impressed with the friendliness. Humorous story of "Bad germs"

25:00 Gertrude receives her AB degree.

26:00 Gets a job in Granite High school near Salt Lake

26:30 Again impressed with kindness and friendliness. Students cooperative and receptive.

27:00 She becomes engaged to be married. How they met.

29:00 Husband, August, gets teaching job in Price, Utah. He does Spanish and German and she teaches Home Ec.

30:00 Salary low. They decide that he should work on his Master's degree and she to help with the language.

31:00 He encourages her to go on with Fine Arts and also to get her Master's degree. Move to Berkeley.

32:00 Gertrude receives her MA in 1939

33:00 She recounts her interests in Art

35:00 August gets a job in the Military Academy in Bay area. Gertrude does her practice teaching.

36:00 They move to Alport where husband receives better salary and benefits not available in Academy.

40:00 In response to question "How did you like California?" Gertrude tells about life in Berkeley and Epworth Hall.

46:00 Big change when husband gets job in 1931 at Sac'to Junior College.

48:00 School not in favor of husband and wife in same institution.

49:00 Their only child, a daughter Marlene, is born.

50:00 Her first contacts with AAUW in 1931. She again delighted with the friendliness. Mrs. Blass invites her to the Book Section. They meet in homes. Stayed with that group until now, 1984, and has made wonderful lasting friendships which she treasures.

51:00 Relates additional gains from relationships in that group. They feel like sisters. Tells of Community contributions.

52:00 Refers to some names of members. Carol Mortier, Grace Lusk, etc.

Gertrude Mihsfeldt

- 53:00 Gertrude's art work receives recognition. AAUW has a carnival and she does some of the decorations.
- 54:00 They sponsor her showing of water colors and drawings at Crocker Art Gallery for National Art week.
- 55:00 More about her competitive showings; ie Kingsley and Northern California Arts.
- 56:00 Something about the recent holidays. She drives her own car.
- 57:00 Women's Suffrage.
- 58:00 Voting after she received citizenship from a Federal judge in Salt Lake City. Another humorous incident. She votes for Herbert Hoover.
- 59:00 Makes comparison between herself and her mother in opportunities for women. She appreciates the support she received from so many fine people who touched her life.
- 60:00 Looks back upon a full, happy and busy life. Would like a peek into the 21st Century. Hopes for a world without war and believes this could be achieved through more forging and better communication.